



**National  
Transportation  
Safety Board**

# The Role of Sleep in Transportation Safety: NTSB Investigations and Recommendations

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# Federal Agencies: Transportation

NTSB

FMCSA

FRA

NHTSA

PHMSA

DOT

MARAD

FTA

FHWA

FAA



NTSB



- 1) determining the probable cause of transportation accidents**
- 2) making recommendations to prevent their recurrence**



**NTSB**





All Modes



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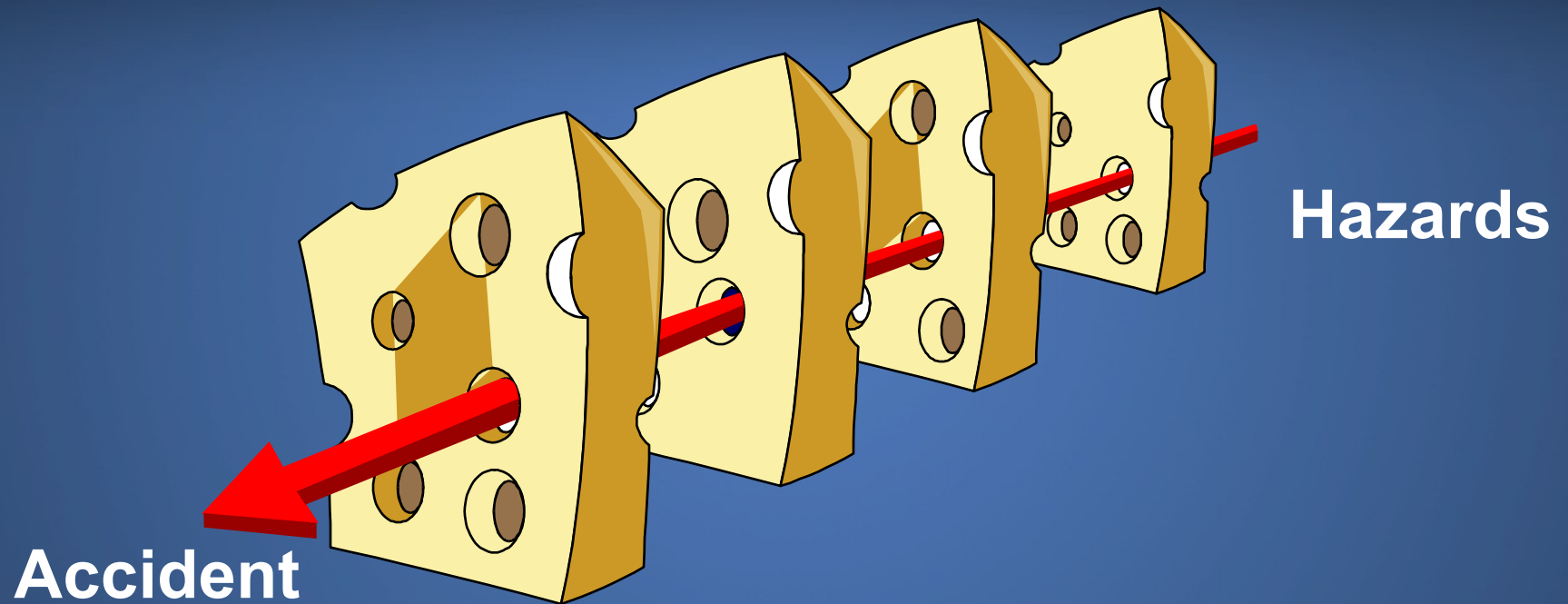
# Independent Federal Agency: Created in 1967

- ~ 132,000 accident investigations
- 13,500+ safety recommendations
- ~ 2,500 organizations/recipients
- 82% acceptance rate





# “Swiss Cheese” Model (Reason)



Successive layers of defenses, barriers, and safeguards



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# NTSB Characterized as:

‘moral compass and industry conscience’

NTSB Chairman Deborah A.P. Hersman



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Sleep loss, circadian disruption,  
and sleep disorders are safety  
risks in transportation.



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# Four Fatigue Factors +

- Sleep loss
- Continuous hours of wakefulness
- Circadian/time of day
- Sleep disorders
- Other considerations



# Guantanamo Bay Cuba

First NTSB aviation accident to  
cite fatigue as probable cause

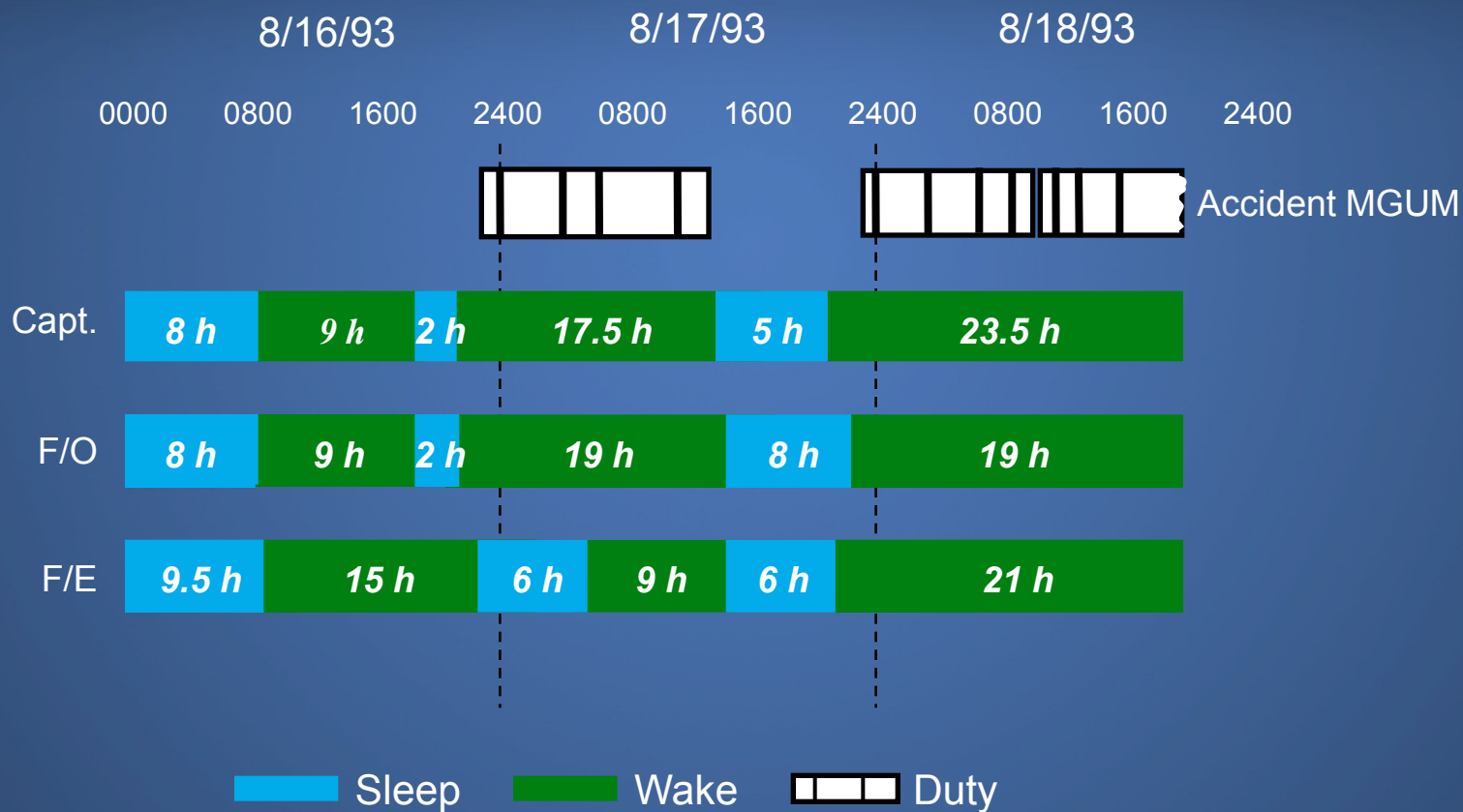


- acute sleep loss, sleep debt, circadian disruption



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# Crew Sleep History



# Observed Performance Effects

- Degraded decision-making
- Visual/cognitive fixation
- Poor communication/coordination
- Slowed reaction time





Uncontrolled In-Flight Collision with Terrain  
AIA Flight 808, Douglas DC-8-61, N814CK  
U.S. NAS, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, August 18, 1993

“The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable causes of this accident were the impaired judgment, decision making, and flying abilities of the captain and flight crew due to the effects of fatigue...”



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# Miami, Oklahoma (June 26, 2009)

- Initial minor accident (~1:13 pm)
  - blocked eastbound I-44
- 2008 Volvo truck-tractor (~1:19 pm)
  - refrigerated semitrailer
  - traveling eastbound on I-44
  - 69 mph with cruise control engaged
  - without slowing or braking collided into queue of slowing & stopped vehicles



# Fatigue Factors

- Off work for 3 weeks: day active/night sleep schedule
- 3am to 3pm shift work/drive schedule (since 1997)
- Early bedtime (2 hr phase advance in sleep time)
- Obtained min 3 hrs/max 5 hrs sleep prior to accident
- Subsequently diagnosed with mild sleep apnea





# Miami, OK (June 26, 2009)

10 fatalities  
3 serious injuries  
2 minor injuries  
5 no injuries





# Probable Cause (fatigue)

“ . . . driver’s fatigue, caused by the combined effects of acute sleep loss, circadian disruption associated with his shift work schedule, and mild sleep apnea, which resulted in the driver’s failure to react to slowing and stopped traffic ahead by applying the brakes or performing any evasive maneuver to avoid colliding with the traffic queue. . . . ”





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## **Track Path Animation**

Collision Between Two BNSF Railway Freight Trains

Red Oak, Iowa

April 17, 2011

DCA11FR002



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# Probable Cause (fatigue)

“ . . . failure of the crew of the striking train to comply with the signal indication requiring them to operate in accordance with restricted speed requirements and stop short of the standing train because they had fallen asleep due to fatigue resulting from their irregular work schedules and their medical conditions.”







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## Animation of Accident Reconstruction

### Motorcoach Run Off Road-Collision with Bridge Signpost

Interstate Highway 95 Southbound  
New York, New York  
March 12, 2011

HWY11MH005



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# 'Bronx Bus', New York, NY (March 12, 2011)



15 fatalities  
17 injuries



# Probable Cause

“The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the accident was the motorcoach driver's failure to control the motorcoach due to fatigue resulting from failure to obtain adequate sleep, poor sleep quality, and the time of day at which the accident occurred.”





NTSB recommendations  
to address fatigue.



NTSB



# NTSB Safety Recommendations: Fatigue

- 40 years ago: May 10, 1972
- “Revise FAR 135 to provide adequate flight and duty time limitations.” (A-72-55)
- Classified “Closed-Unacceptable”





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### MOST WANTED LIST

A program to increase the public's awareness of, and support for, action to adopt safety steps that can help prevent accidents and save lives. The following are ten of the current issues.



Addressing Human  
Fatigue



General Aviation  
Safety



Safety Management  
Systems



Runway Safety



Bus Occupant Safety



Pilot & Air Traffic  
Controller  
Professionalism



Recorders



Teen Driver Safety



Addressing Alcohol-  
Impaired Driving



Motorcycle Safety



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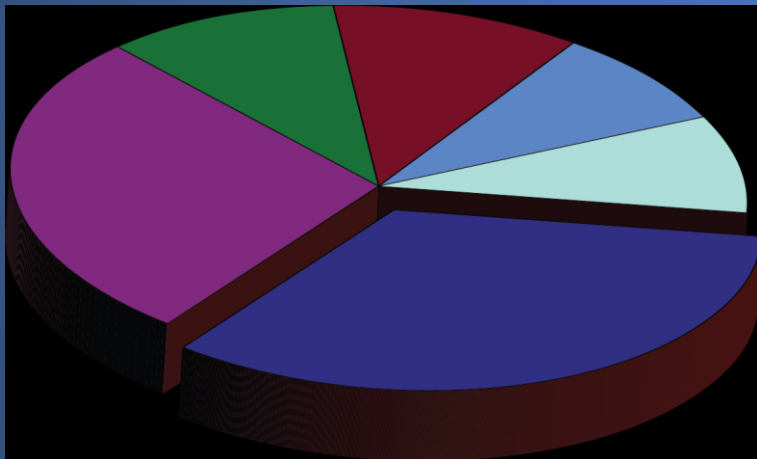
# NTSB Safety Recommendations: Fatigue

- MOST WANTED 1990 - 2012
- ~200 fatigue recommendations



# Complex Issue:

## Requires Multiple Solutions



- Scheduling Policies and Practices
- Education/Awareness
- Organizational Strategies
- Healthy Sleep
- Vehicle and Environmental Strategies
- Research and Evaluation





# NTSB Fatigue Recommendations: Education/Strategies

- Develop a fatigue education and countermeasures training program
- Educate operators and schedulers
- Include information on use of strategies: naps, caffeine, etc.
- Review and update materials



# Scheduling Policies and Practices

Victoria, Texas, January 2, 2008



Victoria, Texas Fire Department

- Day sleep, night drive, ~ 4 am WOCL



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# NTSB Fatigue Recommendations: Hours of Service / Scheduling

- Science-based hours of service
- Allow for at least 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep
- Fatigue mitigation strategies in the hours-of-service regulations for passenger-carrying drivers who operate during the nighttime window of circadian low
- Reduce schedule irregularity and unpredictability





# Sleep Apnea

Mexican Hat, UT, January 6, 2008



- 360 rollover, 50/53 ejected, 9 fatalities, OSA (-CPAP)



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# NTSB Fatigue Recommendations: Sleep Apnea/Health Related

- Develop standard medical exam to screen for sleep disorders; require its use
- Educate companies and individuals about sleep disorder detection and treatment, and the sedating effects of certain drugs
- Ensure drivers with apnea are effectively treated before granting unrestricted medical certification



# Owatonna, MN (July 31, 2008)



8 fatalities



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# Owatonna, MN (July 31, 2008): Safety Recommendations

7. Revise regulations and policies to permit appropriate use of prescription sleep medications by pilots under medical supervision for insomnia.
9. Review the policy standards for all common sleep-related conditions, including insomnia, and revise them in accordance with current scientific evidence to establish standards under which pilots can be effectively treated for common sleep disorders while retaining their medical certification.



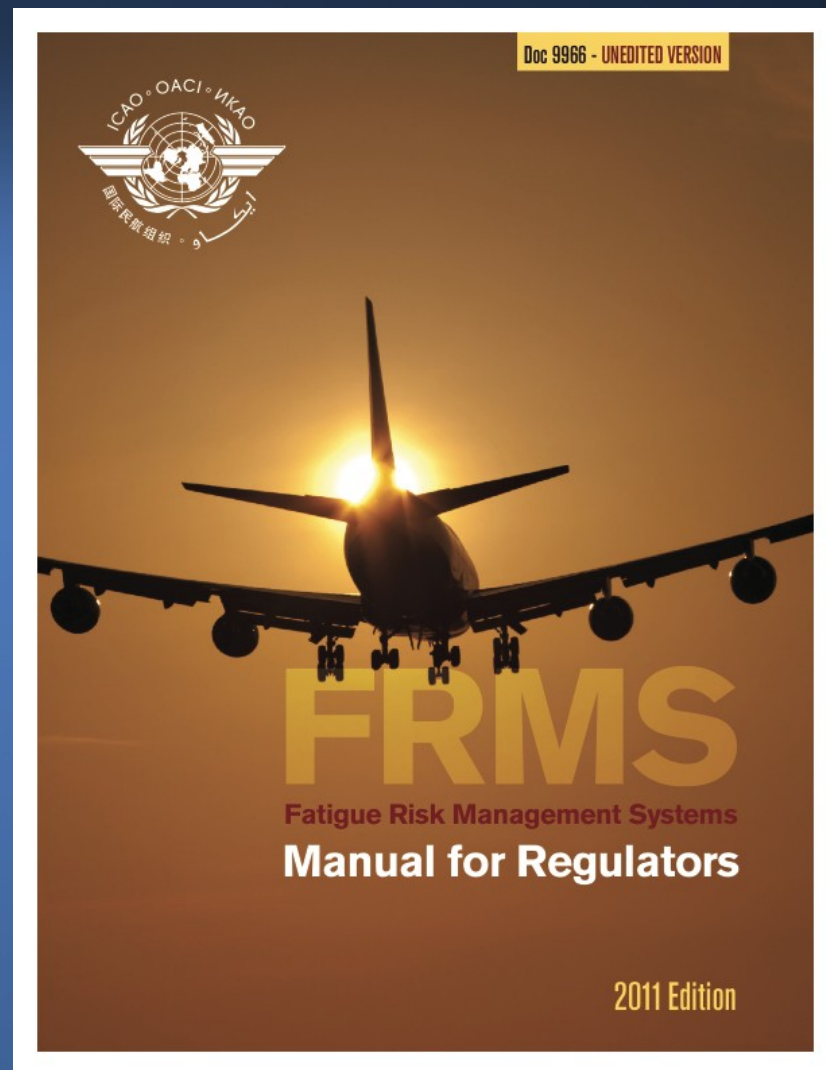
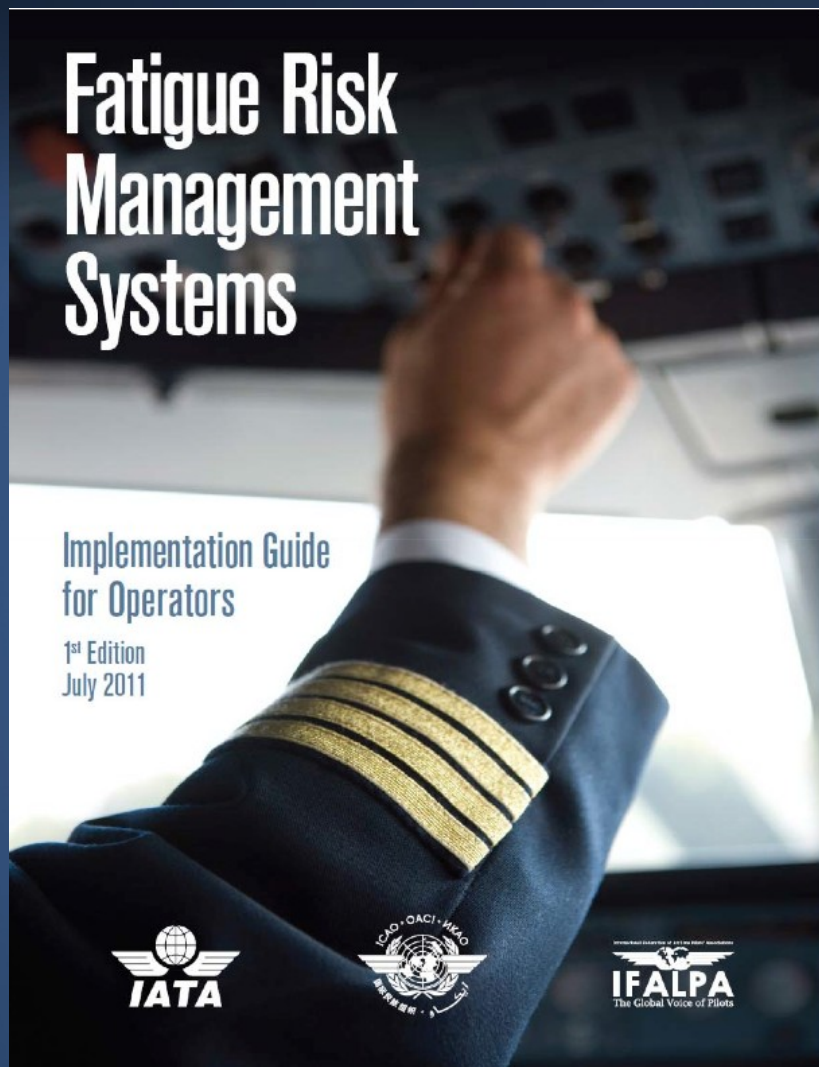
# NTSB Fatigue Recommendations: Fatigue Management Systems

- Develop guidance based on empirical and scientific evidence for operators to establish fatigue management systems
- Establish an ongoing program to monitor, evaluate, report on, and continuously improve fatigue management programs implemented by motor carriers to identify, mitigate, and continuously reduce fatigue-related risks for drivers.





# Examples



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# Manage Sleep = Enhance Safety

- Promote culture change
- Educate everyone
- Acknowledge risks
- Take action!



Good sleep, safe travels.



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